WOODBINE-ARBOR;

OR THE

LITTLE GARDENERS.

A STORY OF A

HAPPY CHILDHOOD.

NEW HAVEN.

PUBLISHED BY S. BABCOCK.

1850.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Let me tell you, my dear young reader, about a happy little family of three brothers and three sisters, who lived in a pleasant home, not far from the great city of New-York. Their father, Mr. Howard, was a wealthy merchant, and had his store in the city, to which he usually rode early in the morning, directly after breakfast, and returned home in season to take tea with his family. He had six children, the little folks whom I am now going to tell you about.

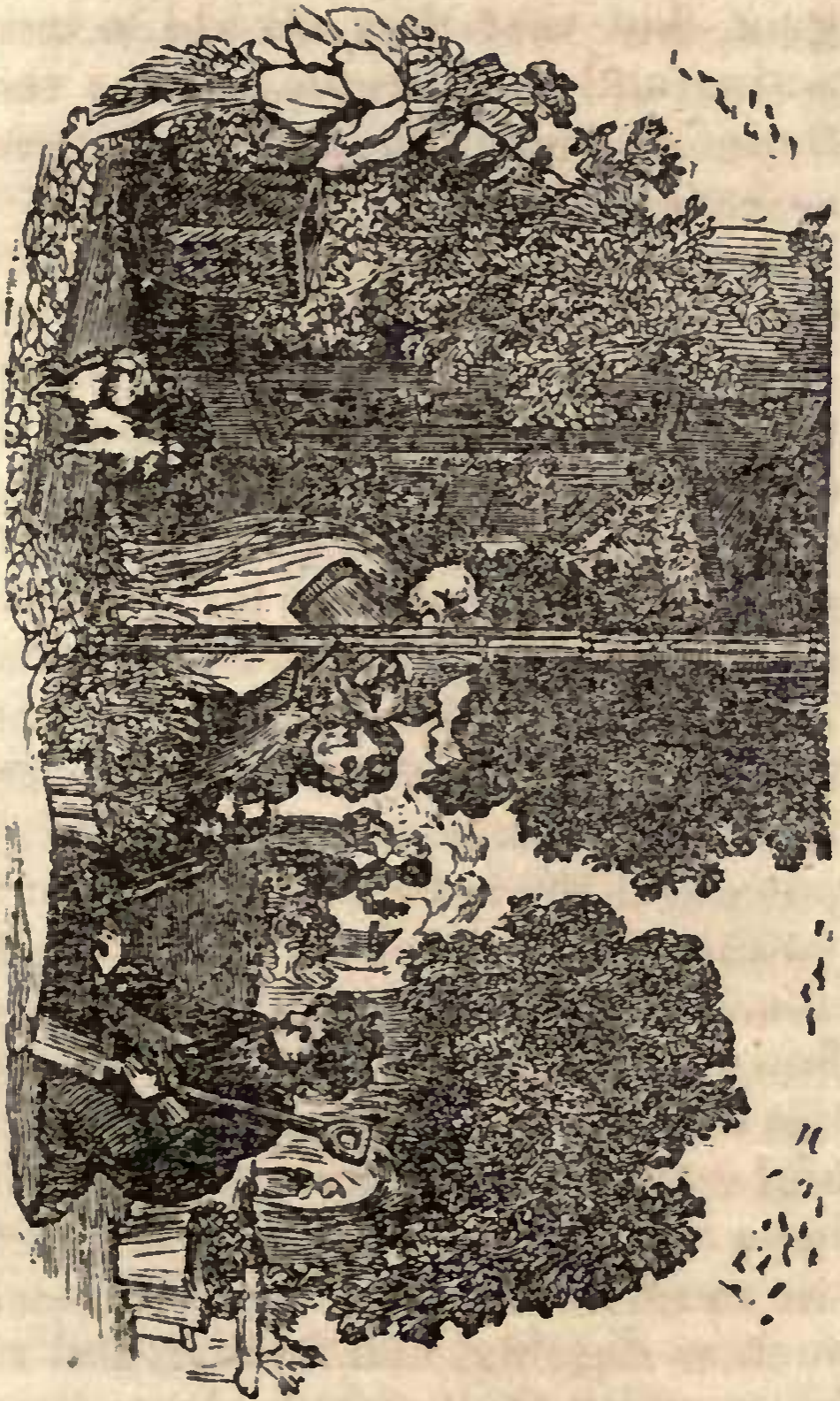
The girls were named, Maria, Elizabeth, and Harriet. The boys were Henry, Charles, and John.—Henry was the oldest, then Charles, Maria, John, Elizabeth, and Harriet.

Their home was a beautiful country-seat, situated not far from the

East river, with fine old shade trees in front of it. In the rear was a very large garden, laid out with great neatness and taste, and well stocked with fruits and flowers. Then there were walks and borders, and summer-houses, and arbors, and almost every thing which could render it a delightful place.

One portion of his grounds Mr. Howard had laid out for a garden for his children. This was to be their own, and in it they were to dig, and hoe, and rake, and plant, and transplant, and water, just as they pleased, so long as they were attentive to their lessons, obedient to their parents, and kind to each other. When any of them misbehaved,—which was very seldom,—that child was forbidden to visit the garden for one or two days, or a week, according to the nature of its offence.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard were both anxious that their children should grow up, not only good and intelli-



gent, but that they should acquire active and industrious habits; they therefore encouraged them all girls as well as boys, to pass their play-hours in the healthy and delightful employment of gardening.

Well, our young friends heartily seconded the wishes of their parents, and except in cold or stormy weather, their little garden was the scene of great industry, as soon as their several lessons for the day were recited. They had a complete set of garden tools, just the right size for such little folks: spades, hoes, rakes, watering-pots, and a wheelbarrow. I assure you they did not let these tools lie idle. Their garden, which produced flowers of all kinds, and many varieties of fruit, always presented a neat and workman-like appearance. The boys usually took upon themselves the most laborious part of the work, such as digging, and hoeing, and raking, while their sisters planted and transplanted, and watered, and pru-

ned and trimmed, as occasion required.

One day, early in the Spring, the little folks took it into their heads to build an arbor in their garden. So, getting their mother's consent, they applied to the gardener, who furnished them with some stout poles and strips of boards necessary for their purpose. Accordingly, they were soon industriously engaged in their first essay at building.

Henry planned the shape and the frame, and then he and Charles, with mallet and hammer in hand, drove the poles into the ground, and nailed on the strips of board; while Maria and Elizabeth held the materials for them, and Harriet and John handed up such things as were needed.

In four or five days, "Woodbine Arbor," as the little folks named it, was quite finished. In the center of it they had placed a table, and built seats around the sides of the arbor. These the girls covered very neatly

with cloth, which their mamma gave them for the purpose.

At each corner of the arbor, our young gardeners set out a fine large woodbine, which the gardener gave them, and at the sides several beautiful climbing roses. These vines they trained up to, and over the top of the arbor, in such a way as to shade the inside from the rays of the sun.

When these plants were in full bloom, the arbor presented a lovely appearance, and was filled with the most delightful fragrance. Here our little gardeners retired when they were fatigued with their labors, or when the heat of the sun prevented their working in the garden.

On the anniversary of the wedding day of Mr. and Mrs. Howard, the children always selected from their garden the choicest flowers, as an offering to their beloved parents; indeed, each of them cultivated several rare and beautiful kinds for this particular occasion. Gathering the flowers

together, they exerted their utmost skill in forming two fine large bouquets for their father and mother, which were presented as an offering from all the children, and which were designed to grace the vases on the parlor mantel-piece.

When these two bouquets were arranged to the satisfaction of all the little folks, each one made two of a smaller size, just alike, which they presented in their own name.

You may be sure these little gifts of affection were duly prized by the fond parents, and were kept from fading as long as possible. They were rewarded, too, by some suitable present to each child, accompanied by kind wishes, and such words of advice and instruction as the occasion called for. These words of advice, given at such times, made a lasting impression; they were remembered by the little ones as long as they remembered the happy events which called them forth.

But you must not suppose these little masters and misses were so fond of gardening as to spend all their play-hours there. Oh, no; like most other children, they liked play and play-things. The girls all had dolls, and a pet rabbit and two little white poodles to amuse themselves with. Henry made kites, bows, arrows, and other toys, and Charles was quite fond of making and sailing little toy ships, while John, the youngest, liked nothing much better than playing with a ball or trundling his hoop. Still, the garden, after all, afforded them more real and lasting pleasure than any thing else.

But the year I am telling you about,—the year in which our little friends built their arbor,—instead of presenting the bouquets as usual, they begged their parents to visit them at the arbor. The invitation was readily accepted, and the children accordingly made the necessary preparations. Having selected the very

choicest fruits from their garden, they arranged it to the best advantage on the table, placing the two large bouquets in the center; they then each held the two smaller ones in their hands, and presented them, with their best wishes, as their parents entered the arbor.

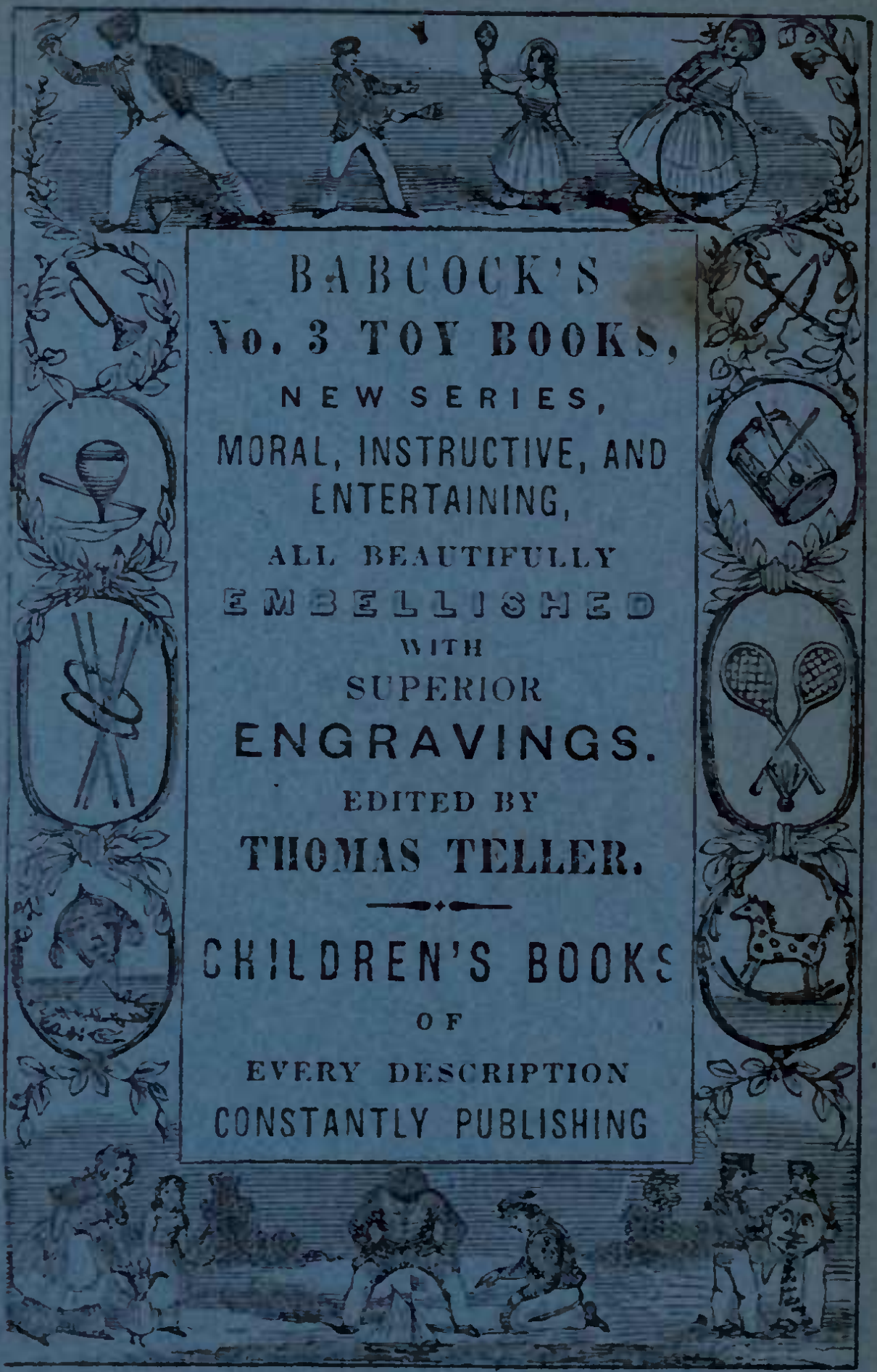
I shall not attempt to tell you how delighted the young people all were on this occasion, when their neat little arbor, the work of their own hands, was thus honored with a visit from their parents. With some crowding, there was room for the eight persons, but mamma made a little more by taking the youngest up in her lap. Then the different fruits were handed round, and all partook of such as suited them best. Never were happier children assembled, or happier parents. Not even the finest fruit raised by their experienced gardener, ever tasted half as sweet as that which was eaten at the little feast in "Woodbine Arbor."

When it was over, mamma, at the urgent request of the children, sang one of her sweetest songs, and then they all took a walk through the garden. Many, very many, were the words of praise and encouragement spoken by the parents, as they beheld the neatness and good order in which every thing was kept. The handsomely laid out beds and borders, the straight rows of plants, the well-trained vines, the beautiful flowers, and the luxuriant growth of the little trees and shrubbery, without a single weed to mar the beauty of the garden, excited their highest admiration.

"My dear little ones," said Mr. Howard, "let the care which you have bestowed upon this sweet little spot, and the success which has attended your efforts, incite you to higher and nobler aims, which will most certainly be rewarded with higher and nobler results. With the same care and industry which

you have bestowed upon your garden, cultivate your *minds*, and raise in them the lovely and unfading flowers of piety and virtue. Root out from them the noxious weeds of vice and evil habits, and train all your thoughts upward to your heavenly Father and Benefactor. Assist each other in this mental cultivation, with the same kindness which you have all shown in cultivating your garden; be ready at all times to share with the poor and needy the blessings which you enjoy, as freely as you have this day shared the productions of your garden with your parents. Then, like the plants which you have here cultivated, you will bear fruit and flowers to bless and cheer your fellow-men; and when you are removed from earth you will be transplanted in heaven, and blossom forever in the *Garden of the Lord*."

END.



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